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ABSTRACT

The "Insights" newsletter, published eight times during the academic year, is intended for elementary teachers interested in open education. The newsletter includes descriptions of actual classroom projects, discussions of teaching techniques, and sources of curriculum and professional materials. This issue treats the topic human relations and contains four articles: Human Relations: Grading Children; Four Strategies to Encourage Evaluative Input from Children; Solving Moral Dilemmas; and The Human Development Program--An Affective Education Activity. During the Bicentennial year, "Insights" will also carry listings of materials which might be helpful to teachers. (Author/RM)

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CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
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Human Relations: Grading Children???

By: Charles Nielson
Assistant Professor
Center for Teaching and Learning

When I think of Human Relations in teaching I find myself considering topics like student/teacher relationships; student/student relationships; parent/teacher relationships; self-concept; responsibility; individual differences in physical and emotional characteristics; individual differences in interest and in learning styles; the processes of learning, valuing, growing, understanding ourselves and our relationship to the world that surrounds us. While considering this range of topics, I often find myself returning to one of the most basic, most critical, and most interrelated topics of them all, that of student/teacher relationships. And when thinking about the issue of student/teacher relationships and observing teachers and students, I inevitably find myself asking "What's going on here?, What's wrong", Why are so many students and teachers seemingly at war with each other?" Some days I stop here by asking myself who knows the intricate and numerous reasons for war? I go and try to help some child with their work - a worksheet. Quickly I discover that this worksheet could be one of the reasons for the war I observed between students and teachers. The teacher tries to be excited about the work, but we aren't fooled, and it's not exciting. Another reason for the war perhaps? The teacher suggests we hand in our finished worksheet, but we are not finished. Our unfinished, unexciting work will be evaluated and returned to us later. Another reason for the war and I believe one of the most basic reasons.

For the purpose of this brief writing I'm going to assume, not without some evidence but probably without sufficient evidence, that the most critical area related to our failing student/teacher relationships and the most important contributor to our war games in school has to do with our practice of evaluating children. When I speak of evaluating children of course I mean A, B, C, D, F grading of children, but I also include all of the more subtle ways that we evaluate children, their work and their behavior.

If you are still reading this and I hope muttering it's not true in my classroom you can help the rest of us. Let me ask you to take five minutes of your time and describe how you evaluate students. Some questions you may want to consider: What are your criteria? Why do you use these criteria? How do your students participate in your evaluation procedures? How do your students view your evaluation procedures? How do you communicate and record your evaluations? Please describe your evaluation procedures.

Now I want you to take five more minutes and list the reasons you evaluate students. What are the reasons for which you're involved in the process of evaluating students? Some possibilities you might consider: Learning must be evaluated, learning must be graded, students must be evaluated, parents want grades, schools require grades, grades are positive motivation for students, grades are a powerful level for controlling student behavior, evaluation tells me how students are progressing, grades provide a permanent record of student achievement. ...

Now let's take some time to look at and to share our evaluation procedures.* Some critical questions to consider as we view our evaluation procedures are listed below:

1. How do my evaluation procedures promote positive teaching and learning?

*In order to share your evaluating procedures, send a description of these procedures and your reasons for evaluating students to Chuck Nielson, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND 58202. Copies will be made of all statements received and you will receive a compilation of these materials by return mail.

2. How do my evaluation procedures affect my relationships with my students?

3. How do my evaluation procedures assist me in responding to the individual differences, interests and needs of my students?

4. How do my evaluation procedures assist me in providing growth producing information to parents and other school personnel?

5. How do my evaluation procedures affect cooperation and competition in my classroom?

6. How do my evaluation procedures assist students in their self-evaluative efforts? (Or do my evaluation procedures create students who are dependent on me for evaluation of their efforts?)

These six questions are some of the critical questions that I believe each of us must answer when thinking about or working through the evaluation procedures that we use when teaching children. I would like briefly to clarify what it is I mean when I write about evaluation procedures. What I'm thinking about is the feedback that we provide students that lets them know how we evaluate them or what we think about the kind, the quality, and the amount of work that they are doing. This kind of feedback I find most often takes the form of some graded reporting on work that students have done. However, additional important feedback is also provided by teacher comments both verbal and written. It is these graded reports and the verbal and written comments that I want to include when I write of evaluation procedures.

At this point I would also like to clarify, without going into great detail, the assumption I make that evaluation and learning are inseparable. That learning does not occur without some evaluation and that for efficient learning to go on evaluation must be a part of the process. However, the kind of evaluation that I write of here would seldom take on the characteristics of the evaluation procedures that we teachers generally use. This type of evaluation would most often center or have it's origin in questions asked by the learner. Teachers would constantly question the learner as to how he/she felt they were progressing. The learners evaluation of what they were doing would be essential information and would be encouraged at every opportunity. This does not mean that information and responses to the work and the ideas of the learner would never come from outside of the learner. But it does mean that the origin of the evaluation would begin with the learner.

With these ideas in mind let me change the emphasis to what I believe is a more constructive process of evaluation. A process that I believe supports good teaching, efficient learning and the development of the learner's self-evaluative process. I believe the first step in such a process is to get to know the individual children that we are teaching in terms of their subject matter needs, emotional and personality needs, individual learning styles, what they do best, what they have the most difficulty with, what they enjoy most, and what they dislike most. We must set up ways to observe children in order to determine whether or not they are making the kind of progress that they're interested in, that we are interested in and that their parents are interested in. Individual learning and personal goals must be worked out with the people concerned for each child. In order to accomplish this I would suggest a loose-leaf notebook with each child's name at the top of a separate page. I would encourage teachers to observe, make notes, and conference with at least one child per day and hopefully between three and five children per day. I suggest that we select the number of children that we feel we can observe and conference with each day. That we do this observing and conferencing and that we make a record by recording student statements, recording feelings that we have and feelings that the students express. I would record such things as what is the child doing, how he/she feel about what they're doing, what would they like to do, what don't they like to do. I believe the procedure for making this kind of record and observation can become very much a part of the teaching day. To accomplish this we simply proceed through the 20-40 students that we are teaching by observing and conferencing with as many of them each day as we are able. This may mean that some days we will conference with one or two students. Other days we may

observe or conference with as many as three to five students. But each day we will be conferencing with and observing at least one of our students. By observing and conferencing with three students per day in ten teaching days we will have obtained data on 30 students. What we are collecting is the raw data necessary for getting to know the subject matter needs, the emotional and personality needs, the individual learning styles of the individual students that we are teaching. In addition, we will be providing ourselves with numerous opportunities to assist our students in evaluating what they are doing. Let me also suggest that we communicate with the parents of one or two of the students we have just observed that day in order to provide some feedback to the parent and to obtain information from the parent. This communication to the parent could be accomplished by telephone, through written messages, or by personal visitation with the parent, but the important aspect is that we would be making some effort to communicate what we are learning about the individual children to their parents and we would be obtaining the parent's perspective and the parent's help in learning about the individual child. After proceeding through all of our pupils with one observation and one conference I would suggest that we begin the process again with the first child that we observed and conferenced with and proceed through our class much as we did the first time. Given that our school year is often divided into semesters, quarters or six-week periods, we can, through simple arithmetic, determine the number of conferences and observations that we would like to have with each child by the end of these periods and we can gauge the number of observations and conferences per day that we must do to accomplish this. The important thing, however, is to not let a day go by without making some notes and doing some conferencing with individual students.

A second step, and one that a good many teachers are presently practicing is simply to keep a folder of each student's work and to go through this folder with the student in order to assist the child in developing his/her self-evaluative processes. For me, it is critical to use this folder in such a way that we are assisting children in their ability to evaluate their progress. I also believe that this folder should be open to the children in order that they may collect their efforts that are important to them. In addition, this folder can provide some of the raw data necessary for teacher diagnosis, for teacher and student planning and with the student's permission this folder can be used when conferencing with parents.

Given this brief statement as a starting point I would very much like to obtain your reactions and suggestions in order to begin a more personal dialogue relating to the issue of student evaluation.

Four Strategies to Encourage Evaluative Input from Children

By: Steve DeLapp
Teacher, Grade 5
Devils Lake, North Dakota

In a classroom learning environment where children are allowed a voice in making decisions about how their time is to be managed, where freedom of movement is allowed, where the emphasis is on integrative learning experiences, where children are encouraged to accept major responsibility for what is accomplished each day, the teacher must carefully develop strategies that elicit an involved and responsible attitude and behavior from children. Certainly every teacher that struggles to recognize individual learning styles and works to personalize the educational experiences for each child, does develop, whether consciously or not, specific strategies to reach these goals.

This paper is based on the belief that the development of a more informal, open learning environment that is responsive to the needs and interests of children, requires a strong emphasis on reflective, evaluative input from children. The strategies that can be employed to elicit feedback from children encompass a wide range of classroom situations. My purpose here will be to identify the

kinds of strategies that have worked most successfully for me in teaching a self-contained classroom of thirty fifth grade children.

These basic strategies are (1) group discussions following an independent activity period, (2) group discussions at the end of the school day, (3) written evaluations and (4) student-teacher conferences. Integral to each of these strategies is the process of teacher directed questioning. This process demands of the teacher a central role in the feedback session, by encouraging and directing student evaluation through leading questions and follow-up discussions. The following description of each strategy will include examples of the kinds of teacher questions that have encouraged reflective thinking from children.

Strategy I

Early in the school year the strategy that most predominates is teacher led discussions following a period of independent learning activity. For example, as independent mathematics activities, such as math games, manipulative materials, measuring tasks, computational practice, etc., are introduced, the discussion following a particular work period can encourage the children to reflect on the quality of the activity time for themselves and the group. The questioning often begins on a very simple level, directed at the entire group, but responded to individually. These questions include:

What did you do during the last hour?
How did you spend your own time?
What didn't you do, but wanted to do?

These questions encourage children to begin thinking about their own efforts at independent learning. In addition, the children often learn a great deal about the range of activities that are possible in the classroom by listening to others describe their involvement.

The next level of questioning for this kind of situation usually involves a reflection on how the children felt about the different activities.

What did you enjoy doing? Why?
What didn't you enjoy doing? Why?
What did you do best?

Accepting both positive and negative responses from the children, in a supportive way, sets an important tone for the classroom and will encourage even greater reflective thinking as the year progresses. If a child responds negatively to a particular activity, I often offer an explanation or rational for why we are doing it. On other occasions I might suggest an alternative activity for that child to pursue during this time block. What is most important is that the teacher remain honest about his/her own ideas, and yet be open and supportive of all children's responses.

I have discovered that children genuinely appreciate a teacher's struggle to explain the reasons for specific activities. While there are many times when a teacher and child might disagree about the value of a learning task, if there has been an attempt at honest communication, the classroom environment benefits in a positive way and the children are often more willing to attempt a wider range of activities.

The final level of questioning in this situation is designed to get the children to think beyond their personal involvement as a learner and to take a critical look at the classroom as a whole. I usually phrase the initial question this way:

Was the classroom a good place to learn?

Implicit in this question are many assumptions about the kind of classroom atmosphere that is conducive to good independent learning. And, ideally, the children and teacher will be working that out together as the year progresses. Typical responses from children include:

"It was too noisy! We couldn't even think."
"We were bothered by John. He took some of our materials."
"I got really involved in what I was doing and didn't even notice the rest of the room."
"Other people kept walking right through where we were trying to work."

The discussions that follow these responses begin to get the children to see that the classroom environment is something for which they are responsible. Controlling noise level, working cooperatively with each other, sharing space and materials, respecting individual privacy are all seen as essential components of an effective, informal

learning environment. And as children respond critically to how well they used a specific time block for independent learning activities, they are beginning to recognize for themselves the importance of the foregoing components in an informal classroom.

While classroom problems are not always solved immediately this way, the strategy of questioning and discussion at least provides an opportunity for children and teachers to share concerns about the classroom environment by looking critically at what is working for them and what is not working.

Strategy II

In addition to following an independent activity period with teacher directed questioning, a group meeting at the end of the day provides an opportune time to repeat this kind of feedback strategy. The levels and kinds of questions are basically the same as those that follow an independent activity time. In addition, though, the children are encouraged to make plans for what they are going to do the next day and to suggest ideas to the teachers about what materials or activities are needed in the classroom.

One or two questions will usually generate enough discussion for a five to ten minute period. Examples of questions that have been valuable for an end-of-the-day discussion are:

What new activity did you get involved with today?
What learning activity do you want to continue with tomorrow?
What activities did you have difficulty with and couldn't get the help you needed?
Did any of you start a new learning project today? Are you finding the information you need?
Did you do something today you didn't enjoy doing?
What did you enjoy most today?
How could our day have been a better one?
How could we make our classroom a better place to learn?
What do you want to do tomorrow that we didn't do today?

A secondary advantage in meeting as a group at the end of the school day is to refresh everyone's mind about what has transpired during the day. The children, as a result, are more likely to go home and share with their parents the kinds of learning activities they were involved with on that particular day.

Strategy III

Another useful kind of strategy to elicit feedback from children has revolved around a weekly planning sheet. This sheet lists the assigned learning tasks for each week, provides a space for recording self-initiated activities and provides a third space for a mid-week or weekly written evaluation.

As the children do their own record keeping for assigned and self-initiated activities, they are encouraged to make comments about the kind of involvement each task required of them. For example, typical comments after a specific activity might be:

"Finished and really enjoyed it."
"Didn't finish. I need help."
"Finished. It was too easy."
"Finished. I didn't like it."
"I had trouble with it."

In addition to involving the children with their own record keeping, the teacher is able to get a better understanding of how a child views his/her own progress in each particular area.

The planning sheet also provides an opportunity for lengthier written, evaluative comments about the week's activities. The advantage of this strategy is that some children will often put down in writing thoughts or ideas they might not share orally with the class or the teacher. A mid-week or weekly written evaluation involves questions such as:

What did you enjoy doing the most this week?
What did you enjoy doing the least?
If you could change anything you wanted to in the classroom, what would you change?
In what do you need more help from the teacher?
What activities would you like to do next week?
What do you think is the most important thing your teacher is trying to teach you this year?
What could you do to be a better self-director in the classroom?
What is something you would like to do but feel you can't?

Many of these questions and others I have used in feedback situations have been taken or adapted from the Children's Interview.[1] The interview can be extremely helpful for teachers in developing a wide range of questions that encourage children to reflect on their own learning and the classroom environment.

Strategy IV

A fourth kind of evaluation strategy that incorporates the whole range of questions previously discussed, is the process of teacher-student conferencing. These conferences may be planned or they may be allowed to happen informally and spontaneously as the teacher converses with the individual child about his/her likes, dislikes, struggles, and successes in the classroom environment. This kind of personal communication can perhaps be the most valuable tool in a teacher's struggle to understand what the child is thinking about.

Sometimes the individual conferences have been used as a follow-up to a specific written comment on the weekly planning sheet. For example, if a child has commented that he/she didn't like a particular activity, the teacher-student conference can often help to get at the reason. On many occasions I have found that when a child didn't enjoy an activity, it was often because he/she didn't understand how to do it. The conference can then direct itself to that immediate problem.

During individual conferences, I have also encouraged children to take a minute to simply observe the classroom. We then discuss together our observations about how the classroom is operating, what activities are going on, how well people are getting along, etc. This technique, I feel, has been useful in getting children to become more aware of the kind of personal responsibility they have in creating a positive classroom environment.

Conferences are helpful, too, in dealing with the social or personal problems that arise over the course of the year. These conferences often include a small group of children.

The foregoing four evaluation strategies can provide an important basis for children to feel more personally involved in the classroom learning process. By encouraging children to reflect on their own learning and the classroom environment, they are often more able to assume the role of responsible learners and self-directors. Essential to the teacher's effort at encouraging feedback from children should be a clear understanding of classroom goals and a willingness to listen carefully to the concerns and thoughts of children. In a teacher's struggle to personalize the educational experience for each child, strategies that encourage reflective, evaluative input from children play a crucial role.

Solving Moral Dilemmas

By: Lowell Thompson
Associate Professor
Center for Teaching and Learning

Working with moral dilemmas in elementary classrooms is one of the most significant and exciting educational movements of the decade. One teacher commented, "I can't shut them up. They would discuss moral dilemmas all afternoon if I would let them. It's fantastic!" Her enthusiasm for moral education is shared by many in the field of education. A recent issue of Social Education (January, 1975) devoted six major articles to the theme "Moral Education: Learning to Weigh Human Values." Several major publishing companies are developing curriculum materials devoted to Moral Education and at least one publishing company (Holt) has materials in print. The Pennsylvanian Council for the Social Studies has endorsed the movement and has begun to provide curriculum materials for their teachers. Several major universities have also developed training programs for teachers interested in Moral Education.

[1]Available from Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota.

What accounts for this very dynamic movement? There are probably a number of reasons but first and foremost it's just fun to try to solve moral dilemmas. Students of all ages, and teachers too, just can't resist attempting to solve a problem that has no "right" solution and the dilemmas provide literally hours of very stimulating, very thought-provoking discussions.

There are, of course, other more profound reasons for the rapid growth of moral education. The "times" appear to be right. There is a new morality emerging and it is not a morality of the 60's which encouraged everybody to "do their own thing." It is instead, a morality that will not accept even the President acting outside the law; a morality committed to adequate medical care as a basic human right; a morality dedicated to the spirit of the law as opposed to a legalistic interpretation of the "letter of the law." In short, a morality of equality and justice and a belief in the dignity of the human experience.

A major factor in the renewed interest in moral education is the work of Professor Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard University. Dr. Kohlberg has developed a theory of cognitive moral development based upon his research with a group of 75 American males who were interviewed every three years between adolescence and adulthood. Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development has been substantiated in several other studies and is becoming more widely accepted. An excellent summary of Kohlberg's theory of cognitive development can be found in the May, 1973 issue of Social Education (see bibliography at the end of this article) but the following dilemma will serve to illustrate Kohlberg's theory.(2)

Heinz's wife was dying from a strange form of cancer. There was a druggist in the village who had made a drug that could save her, but he was selling the drug for $2,000, although it cost him only $200 to make it. Heinz went to all his friends and tried to borrow the money but he could only raise $1,000. So he went to the druggist and said, "Could I have the drug today? I'll pay you later." The druggist said, "No, I invented the drug and I'll charge what I want." Heinz broke into the drugstore and stole the drug. Was he right or wrong to do it? Why?

The rational provided for a particular action, according to Kohlberg, might fall into one of the following three levels or six stages:

Preconventional level

Stage one (punishment obedience stage) "It's wrong to steal. A person will be punished or sent to jail for stealing."

Stage two (personal interest stage) "He should have stolen the drug. He needs his wife to help him raise their family and he might get off with a light sentence."

Conventional level

Stage three (good person stage) "He shouldn't steal it because people will think he is a bad man for stealing." or "He should steal it because people would think he was a bad man for letting his wife die."

Stage four (law and order stage) "It's against the law to steal. What would happen if everyone just broke the law anytime they wanted."

Post Conventional level

Stage five (social responsibility stage) "He should steal it and hope that society will recognize the injustice of sending him to prison for his act."

Stage six (personal conscience stage) "He should steal it because of the value and dignity of human life. He should also make the theft known and work to solve the injustice of laws which allow one man to charge what the traffic will bear for a life-saving drug."

Professor Kohlberg believes that moral development occurs invariantly from stage one to stage two to stage three, etc. A person's development might stop at any one of these stages but he must go through stage one to get to stage two and he must go through stage two to stage three. Further, the degree to which he develops morally is a function of his cognitive development and the quality of his experiences. There is an excellent chance his development will stop at stage two.

The educational implications inherent in moral education seem clear. First of all, a school that does not provide curriculum experiences for children to develop morally as well as intellectually are neglecting, perhaps,

the most important part of a student's education. Secondly, schools that function totally on level one ("If you don't stop that you are going to have to stay in at recess time") or level two ("I have a treat for everyone who does well in spelling today") or level three ("Nice girls don't do that") deprive students of an opportunity to function at higher levels.

In summary, the theory and philosophy of cognitive moral development is extremely powerful. The rational for including moral education in the curriculum seems convincing. Last, but not least, it is a favorite activity of the students and teachers who are beginning to work with moral dilemmas.

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The Human Development Program - An Affective Education Activity

An interview by
Wayne Kuklinski with Darya Lauretig

Wayne Kuklinski, an undergraduate student in CTL was interested in learning about the Human Development Program. The following is an interview in which he questions Darya Lauretig, a former Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Human Relations Cluster, who offered classes in the Human Development Program:

Wayne: "I've recently heard about the Human Development Program that was designed for use in schools and was wondering if you could tell me a little about the program."

Darya: "Sure. There's an awful lot that I could tell you though. Are there some specific questions you have about the program?"

Wayne: "Well, I understand that it's an affective education program; that it focuses more on feelings than the cognitive aspect of education. Is that right?"

Darya: "Yes, that's true. I think you can't really separate the two, the cognitive and affective, but I guess if I had to categorize it as either one or the other I would place it in the affective domain."

Wayne: "Well, how does the program work? Is it just getting together to talk about feelings?"

Darya: "That's the misunderstanding that alot of people have. It's not just getting together to talk about feelings. Maybe I'll start from the very beginning and things might become clearer to you that way. The HDP is an affective education program originally designed for use in the classroom with students of all ages. A group of students consisting of between eight and twelve participants get together in a circle (called the "Magic Circle")

and discuss their feelings and experiences in relation to particular topics. They don't just get together to talk about any feelings they have. There is a sequence of topics that are introduced to the students from day to day. The topics at the beginning of the program are fairly simple - such as "Something That Made Me Feel Good" and then progressively become more complex such as "Something That Gave Me a Mixed Feeling, a Good and Bad Feeling at the Same Time."

Wayne: "So it is a structured group discussion with a sequence of topics."

Darya: "Yes."

Wayne: "It seems from what you said a sequence would be needed - that it might be too difficult to discuss topics which appear in the latter part of the program guides if you hadn't already covered the ground of the first part of the program."

Darya: "Right."

Wayne: "But why was the need felt to design a special structured program for the classroom?"

Darya: "I think by telling you about the history of the program I'll answer your question. The two people who designed the program, Harold Bessell and Uvaldo Palomares had found through their studies that the majority of people who had a need to see psychologists and psychiatrists were middle-aged, middle-class, married and educated people. They found that these people were able to get along fairly well in their lives, but that they were basically discontented with their lives and had a pessimistic view of life. They further found that this disappointment with their lives was in large part due to their inability to be personally effective with people and a lack of understanding about the dynamics of human relationships. Keep in mind that these people were educated. Based on this information gathered, they decided to design a preventative program for use in schools, since people leaving the schools seemed to come away from them without having developed some personal effectiveness. They developed three main areas that the program would focus around: Awareness, Mastery and Social Interaction. It was their belief, supported by the personality-development theories of Karen Horney, that structuring a program to help people became more aware of their feelings, thoughts and actions (Awareness); realize their abilities and learn how to use them (Mastery) and gain an understanding of Human Relationships (Social Interaction), would better enable them to cope with life's emotional experiences. It is through the topics I mentioned earlier that these goals are partially if not fully realized."

Wayne: "So it's through the discussions and the sharing of experiences and feelings that growth is fostered in those three areas."

Darya: "Yes."

Wayne: "That's very interesting. It seems that the program would be important for good mental health just as good food and exercise is important for good physical health."

Darya: "Exactly."

Wayne: "The more I think of my own experiences though the more I think that it might have been hard to talk about feelings like that. We never had group discussions such as the one you're describing when I was in school. I would imagine that there would be students who wouldn't say anything. What do you do then?"

Darya: "If students don't want to participate that's all right. Oftentimes they feel shy or uncomfortable and just listen. It's been many people's experiences though that as the group begins to meet more often the trust level of the group develops and those students begin to enter into the discussion on their own. But we don't push them at all."

Wayne: "How about the teacher's role in the group?"

Darya: "The teacher facilitates the group at least until the students are able to take more responsibility for running the group. She tries to foster interaction between teacher and student, and student and student. It's also important that she participate and share her feelings. Probably her most important role though is being a nonjudgmental listener - accepting the students' feelings in all

cases. This is a very necessary part of the program if the program is to have a chance of succeeding at all. The program is based on the assumption that feelings are real and that social - emotional growth is fostered through the acceptance of those feelings."

Wayne: "It seems that a teacher wanting to use this program would need to have a strong belief in it in order for it to be successful."

Darya: "For sure."

Wayne: "What about implementing it into the school day?"

Darya: "Many teachers treat this program like any other program. They set aside a time of the day to be "Magic Circle" time. The students know about that time and come together just like any other activity."

Wayne: "How about schools that are using the program. Are there many?"

Darya: "Yes, there are. I don't know figures off hand, but I remember reading in the theory manual a few years ago that over thirty-thousand professionals and paraprofessionals had been trained in the use of the program so you can imagine the number of places where circles are going on right now."

Wayne: "You said trained. I would assume there are training sessions for those interested in learning about the program?"

Darya: "Yes. There are workshops about the Human Development Program going on all the time around the country. You can receive information about them by writing to The Institute for Personal Effectiveness in Children located in California."

The following are excerpts from a newsletter recently distributed by Mary Ellen Youngs, a Human Development Program Consultant in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She is presently training teachers in the use of the program and is helping them implement it in the school system there. The excerpts are verbatim comments from teachers, parents and children which capture their feelings about the program so far.

From Northwood School

"I feel it's great. I wish we could have it more often."

"I think Magic Circle is fun. You don't have to do it if you don't want to."

"I think it's really great because you get to know other people better because they tell you what's happened to them in the past and present. And you get to tell things that you always wanted to tell but never had a real chance to."

From Noble School

Several staff members are involved in an HDP in-service. The following letter is from a parent of a student who is participating in a Human Development Program Circle in her classroom.

"Dear Ms. _____,

Just a short note to let you know how impressed my husband and I are with the 'talk groups' you are having in your classroom.

My daughter has been able to verbalize with much more ease 'painful' feelings as well as happy, since your 'talk groups' started. We were especially aware of this, since she has been exposed to trauma in regard to a major illness and its aftermath two years ago, when I had surgery.

Since I work in the field of mental health, I realize how necessary it is for children to allow themselves to verbalize instead of 'bottling up' emotion. Again, our thanks for the time and energy you are spending to make these 'talk groups' a meaningful experience for the children in your classroom.

Sincerely,"

From Roxboro Junior

These are comments from students who have just begun to use the HDP.

"I really felt that if I said anything, other of the people would think I was kind of "weird." (I learned) that I might have been able to say something because others did."

"It would relieve a lot of frustration if you had these more often."

"I had a feeling of belonging. I was in touch with other people's feelings . . . (learned that) other people have many of the same feelings and hobbies as I do."

Other Comments from Northwood School

Would you Believe: A group of third graders preferred to stay in their "talking circle" when physical education time came around.

A fourth grade student said she'd never stay home on Tuesday because that's when HDP time is.

A mother came in to say how great HDP is for her daughter, who talked to her for 45 minutes about it.

Information about Magic Circle may be obtained from:

Human Development Training Institute
7574 University Avenue
La Mesa, California 92041

A Bicentennial Note

The Bicentennial year provides us with many opportunities to reflect upon our roots, examine the present conditions of American life and establish some new commitments for the future. One particular bicentennial program that has some potential for giving direction to some of the foregoing is the American Issues Forum. The Forum is organized around a calendar which focuses upon one major issue for each month for September, 1975 through May, 1976. Each of the months is broken down into four subtopics. The Forum outline, without any narrative description, follows:

AMERICAN ISSUES FORUM

August 31 - September 27, 1975
"A Nation of Nations"

August 31 - September 6: The Founding Peoples
September 7-13: Two Centuries of Immigrants
September 14-20: Out of Many, One
September 21-27: We Pledge Allegiance ...

September 28 - October 25, 1975
The Land of Plenty

September 28 - October 4: A Shrinking Frontier?
October 5-11: The Sprawling City
October 12-18: Use and Abuse in the Land of Plenty
October 19-25: Who Owns the Land?

November 23 - December 20, 1975
"A More Perfect Union:" The American Government

November 23-29: "In Congress Assembled..." A Representative Legislature
November 30 - December 6: A President: An Elected Executive
December 7-13: "The Government": The Growth of Bureaucracy
December 14-20: "By Consent of the States..."

January 11 - February 7, 1976
Working in America

January 11-17: The American Work Ethic
January 18-24: Organization of the Labor Force
January 25-31: The Welfare State: Providing a Livelihood
February 1-7: Enjoying the Fruits of Labor

February 8 - March 6, 1976
"The Business of America ..."

February 8-14: Private Enterprise in the Marketplace
February 15-21: Empire Building: Cornering the Market
February 22-28: Subsidizing and Regulating: Controlling the Economy
February 29 - March 6: Selling the Consumer

March 7 - April 3, 1976
America in the World

March 7-13: The American "Dream" Among Nations
March 14-20: The Economic Dimension
March 21-27: A Power in the World
March 28 - April 3: A Nation Among Nations

April 4 - May 1, 1976
Growing Up in America

April 4-10: The American Family
April 11-17: Education for Work and for Life
April 18-24: "In God We Trust"
April 25-May 1: A Sense of Belonging

May 2 - May 29, 1976
Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

May 2-8: The Rugged Individualist
May 9-15: The Dream of Success
May 16-22: The Pursuit of Pleasure
May 23-29: The Fruits of Wisdom

The full outline can be acquired by writing to the State Bicentennial Commission in your particular state (typically housed in the State Capitol Building).

Insights will carry, during the Bicentennial year, materials which might be helpful to teachers. We would be grateful to teachers who have ideas they would like to share.

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